

Message Text

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R 122015Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8242
INFO AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO
AMCONSUL SAO PAULO
AMCEMBASSY ASUNCION
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AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
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AMEMBASSY LIMA
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AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
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AMEMBASSY QUITO
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 BRASILIA 5443

EO 11652 GDS
TAGS ECIN PBOR PAOV SENV BR XR
SUBJECT: EIGHT AMAZON NATIONS SIGN AMAZON PACT

SUMMARY: THE FOREIGN MINISTERS OF THE EIGHT COUNTRIES OF THE AMAZON
BASIN SIGNED A TREATY IN BRASILIA ON JULY 3 TO PROMOTE CONSULTATION
AND COOPERATION OVER THE LONG TERM IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE VAST
AMAZON REGION. IN ADDRESSING THE VISITING FOREIGN MINISTERS, PRESIDEN
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GEISEL OUTLINED THE TREATY'S IMMEDIATE AND LONGER-TERM OBJECTIVES,
STRESSED THAT THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE AMAZON BASIN IS A MATTER OF THE
"EXCLUSIVE RESPONSIBILITY" OF AMAZON COUNTRIES, AND CHARACTERIZED THE
TREATY AS A RESPONSE TO EFFORTS FROM OUTSIDE THE AREA, HOWEVER WELL
INTENDED THEY MAY NOW BE, TO INTERNATIONALIZE THE REGION. GEISEL
ALSO STRESSED THAT THE GOVERNING PRINCIPLE OF THE PACT WAS UNANIMITY
AND "STRICT EQUALITY" AMONG MEMBER NATIONS, WHICH GUARANTEED AGAINST

DOMINATION OR ATTEMPTS AT UNILATERAL ADVANTAGE BY ANY COUNTRY (E.G., BRAZIL). FONMIN SILVEIRA DESCRIBED PACT AS SHOWCASE OF COOPERATION WHICH WILL BENEFIT MANY LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES. GOB NEGOTIATORS ARE GREATLY PLEASED THAT RELATIVELY LITTLE EFFORT OVER A SHORT FIFTEEN MONTHS RESULTED IN AN AGREEMENT THAT IN GOB'S VIEW WILL HAVE, AMONG OTHER EFFECTS, THAT OF HELPING BRAZIL PROTECT ITS VAST AMAZON RESOURCES FROM UNNAMED FOREIGN PREDATORS. WHILE THEY CONSIDER THE TREATY A "DECLARATION OF INTENT" RATHER THAN AN IMMEDIATELY OPERATIVE DOCUMENT (THE FIRST MINISTERIAL-LEVEL MEETING UNDER IT WILL NOT TAKE PLACE UNTIL TWO YEARS AFTER RATIFICATION BY ALL SIGNATORIES), THEY EXPECT IT TO ASSUME INCREASING IMPORTANCE OVER THE NEXT "FIVE, TEN AND TWENTY YEARS" IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE AMAZON REGION. END SUMMARY.

2. THE SIGNING IN BRASILIA ON JULY 3 OF THE TREATY OF AMAZONIAN COOPERATION BY THE FOREIGN MINISTERS OF BOLIVIA, COLOMBIA, ECUADOR, GUYANA, PERU, SURINAM, VENEZUELA AND BRAZIL CLIMAXED NEGOTIATIONS INITIATED IN MARCH 1977 BY BRAZIL, NEARLY 60 PERCENT OF WHOSE TERRITORY MAKES UP BY FAR THE LARGEST PORTION OF THE IMMENSELY RICH AMAZON BASIN.

3. IN ADDRESSING THE FOREIGN MINISTERS, PRESIDENT GEISEL STRESSED THE REMARKABLY SHORT TIME IT HAD TAKEN THE EIGHT NATIONS TO AGREE ON THE PRINCIPLES ESPOUSED IN THE TREATY: BRAZIL SOUNDED OUT THE SEVEN OTHER GOVERNMENTS IN MARCH 1977; THEIR RESPONSE ENCOURAGED THE GOB TO CIRCULATE A DRAFT TEXT, WHICH WAS DISCUSSED AND IMPROVED AT CONFIDENTIAL

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MEETINGS IN BRASILIA IN NOVEMBER 1977 AND MARCH 1978, THE FINAL TEXT HAVING BEEN APPROVED IN CARACAS IN JUNE. THE TREATY'S IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVE, GEISEL SAID, IS "TO CREATE A MECHANISM WHICH WILL MAKE PERIODIC AND FREQUENT THOSE CONTACTS BETWEEN GOVERNMENTS AND TECHNICAL SECTORS OF THE REGION THAT HAVE SO FAR BEEN CASUAL AND SPORADIC". THE PURPOSE OF THE TREATY, GEISEL EXPLAINED, "IS TO BRING TOGETHER, AT ALL LEVELS, THE POPULATIONS AND GOVERNMENTS OF THE AMAZON AND TO GIVE CONTINUITY TO THAT EFFORT. WHEN THESE GOALS HAVE BEEN ACHIEVED, THERE WILL HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED CONDITIONS SO THAT, AS A NATURAL FOLLOW-ON, THERE MAY BE IDENTIFIED PROJECTS AND AREAS SUSCEPTIBLE OF COOPERATION". GEISEL SPOKE OF NAVIGATION, TRANSPORTATION AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, AND SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL RESEARCH, STATING THAT EFFORTS IN ALL SUCH FIELDS WOULD "SERVE A HIGHER OBJECTIVE: TO STRESS THE FACT THAT THE DEVELOPMENT AND PRESERVATION OF AMAZONIA ARE THE EXCLUSIVE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE COUNTRIES OF THE REGION."

4. GEISEL THEN ADDRESSED A THEME THAT HAS BEEN CURRENT IN BRAZIL IN RECENT YEARS BUT WHICH GOES BACK DECADES TO EARLIER EXPLORATION AND PARTIAL EXPLOITATION OF AMAZON AREAS, E.G. US-SPONSORED RUBBER DEVELOPMENT IN THE LATE NINETEENTH AND EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURIES. HE SPOKE OF THE "REAL THREATS THAT WEIGHED, AND WEIGH, OVER THE AREA";

OF PAST "CAMOUFLAGED DESIGNS OF PENETRATION OR

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DOMINATION...WHICH TODAY MAY TAKE ON THE MORE SUBTLE FORM OF WELL-
INTENTIONED CONCERN" OVER CONSERVATION OF AMAZONIAN RESOURCES AND
ENVIRONMENT. GEISEL ALSO ADDRESSED THE OBVERSE OF THAT THEME:
THE CONCERNS OF BRAZIL'S NEIGHBORS THAT BRAZIL HAS ITS OWN HEGEMONIAL
DESIGNS ON THE ENTIRE AMAZON BASIN. TREADING LIGHTLY HERE, HE
STRESSED THAT EACH SIGNATORY IS TO RETAIN ABSOLUTE SOVEIREIGNTY OVER
ITS OWN AMAZON TERRITORY, THAT DEVELOPMENT IS TO BE ON THE BASIS
OF ABSOLUTE EQUALITY AMONG MEMBER STATES, AND THAT THE "BASIC
RULE OF THE MECHANISM (TO BE DEVELOPED) WILL BE UNANIMITY, STRICT
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EQUALITY AMONG MEMBERS, AND GUARANTEES AGAINST THE RISE OF EHEGEMONIES OR EFFORTS TOWARDS UNILATERAL ADVANTAGE". FINALLY, GEISEL ALSO MADE A POINT OF AFFIRMING THAT THE NEW TREATY INTENDS NEITHER TO ABOLISH OR SUPPLANT OTHER EFFORTS TOARDS LATIN-AMERICAN INTEGRATION(E.G., THE ANDEAN PACT), BUT RATHER TO COMPLEMENT THEM IN A REGION IN WHICH, UP TO NOW, DEVELOPMENT HAD TAKEN PLACE IN AN ISOLATED, UNCOORDINATED MANNER.

5. IN ADDRESSING THE SAME GROUP, FONMIN SILVEIRA SAID THE AMAZON PACT WILL TRANSFORM THE REGION AND WILL BECOME A SHOWCASE OF COOPERATION WHICH WILL BENEFIT MANY LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES. HE PRAISED THE SPIRIT OF COOPEAATION AND COOLLABORATION THAT MADE THE PACE POSSIBLE AND SAID THAT "THE IMPASSE WHICH PARALYZES SO MANY FORUMS OF COOP-ERATION OR DIALOGUE WILL NEVER WEAKEN OURCONVICTION THAT THERE ARE NO ALTERNATIVES TO COOPEATION AS THE ONLY MEANS OF OVERCOMING THE DISPARITIES OF DEVELOPMENT, THE KEY TO THE PROBLEMS OF OUR ERA." LIKE GEISEL, HE STRESSED THE SOVEREIGNTY OF EACH COUNTRY OVER ITS OWN AMAZON TERRITGLORY "WITHOUT INTERFERENCE OR LIMITATIONS" IN CARRYING OUT THE POLICY IT DEEMED MOST ADEQUATE.

6. THE MAJOR PROVISIONS OF THE TREATY COMMIT THE SIGNATORIES TO EFFORTS TOWARDS:

- GREATEST POSSIBLE FREEDOM OF NAVIGATION ON AMAZON RIVERS;
- RATIONAL USE OF WATER RESOURCES;
- EXCHANGE OF RESEARCH, INFORMATION AND TECHNICIANS TO PRESERVE PLANT AND ANIMAL LIFE;
- JOINT EFFORTS TO IMPROVE HEALTH CONDITIONS AND PROMOTE TOURISM;
- COOPERATION IN SPECIALIZED SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE REGION;
- EFFORTS TO PRESERVE ARCHEOLOGICAL AND ETHNOLOGICAL TREASURES OF THE REGION;
- EFFORTS TO CREATE AN ADEQUATE TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE;

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--DEVELOPMENT OF RETAIL TRADE ON BORDERS.

7. THE ONLY VISITING FOREIGN MINISTER TO MAKE NEWS WAS PERU'S JOSE DE LA PUENTA, WHO HAD JUST RETURNED FROM A VISIT TO MOSCOW AND ROME. HE TOLD THE GATHERING THAT HE BFOUGHT PERSONAL BEST WISHES FROM POPE PAUL VI AND THAT THE USSR HAD SHOWN INTEREST IN THE PACT AND IN THE POSSIBILITY OF OFFERING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO SOME UNSPECIFIED AMAZONIAN PROJECT. VENEZUELAN FONMIN CONSALVI EXPRESSED SERIOUS DOUBT THAT THE USSR HARBORED ANY SUCH INTENTION.

8. COMMENT: RANKING GOB OFFICIALS WHO WORKED ON THE TRETY ARE VASTLY PLEASED THAT RELATIVELY LITTLE EFFORT OVER A PERIOD OF A SHORT 15 MONTHS (MARCH1977-JUNE1978) HAS BEEN CAPPED BY AN AGREEMENT

BETWEEN BRAZIL AND ITS SEVEN AMAZON NEIGHBORS THAT, IN THE GOB'S VIEW, WILL HELP BRAZIL PROTECT ITS AMAZON RESOURCES FROM UNNAMED FOREIGN PREDATORS UNTIL BRZIL IS READY TO DEVELOP THEM OR IS BETTER ABLE TO CONTROL THIS DEVELOPMENT BY SOME COMBINATION OF BRAZILIAN AND OTHER EFFORT. THESE SAME OFFICIALS CONSIDER THE PRESENT TREATY, HOWEVER, TO BE A "DECLARATION OF INTENT" BY THE EIGHT SIGNATORIES RATHER THAN AN OPERATIVE DOCUMENT; IT WILL COME INTO EFFECT AFTER RATIFICATION BY THE EIGHT NATIONS. SOME GOB OFFICIALS BELIEVE OPTIMIS -
TICALLY THAT THIS WILL OCCUR BEFORE THE END OF 1978; OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES, HOWEVER(E.G., THE AMBASSADOR OF GUYANA) ESTIMATE THAT INTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOME OF THE SIGNATORY COUNTRIES (INCLUDING HOW OWN) WILL PUT RATIFICATION BACK INTO MID-OR LATE 1979. IN ANY EVENT, IT WILL NOT BE UNTIL AFTER RATIFICATION BY ALL THAT IMPE-
MENTING AGREEMENTS WILL BE NEGOTIATED. (MOREOVER, THE FIRST MEETING OF FOREIGN MINISTERS UNDER THE PACE WILL NOT BE HELD UNTIL TWO YEARS AFTER IT ENTERS INTO EFFECT.) AS EXPLAINED BY FONMIN OFFICIALS, SUBSEQUENT AGREEMENTS WILL NOT NECESSARILY BE AMONG THE EIGHT SIGNATORIES BUT, DEPENDING UPON THE SUBJECT MATTER, COULD BE AMONG ANY COMBINATION OF TWO OR MORE OF THE EIGHT COUNTRIES AND

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AMEMBASSY QUITO

AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

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COULD DEAL WITH MATTERS OF CONCERN TO LIMITED GEOGRAPHIC AREAS AFFECTING JUST ONE OR TWO STATES, TO THE REGION AS A WHOLE, OR TO ANY INTERMEDIATE AREA OR CONCERN. IN FOREIGN MINISTER SILVEIRA'S WORDS, THE PACT IS EXPECTED TO ACQUIRE INCREASING IMPORTANCE OVER TIME--TO BE PROPORTIONATELY MORE IMPORTANT 5, 10 AND 20 YEARS FROM NOW THAN IT IS TODAY.

9. IN ARRIVING AT A TEXT ACCEPTABLE TO ALL SIGNATORIES, A VARIETY OF ANCILLARY CONCERNS SEEM TO HAVE BEEN SWEEPED UNDER THE RUG. IN
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BETWEEN NEGOTIATING SESSIONS, FOR INSTANCE, A LEADING MEMBER OF THE GOB'S NEGOTIATING TEAM, ASKED HOW THE PARTIES WERE DEALING WITH AMAZON ISSUES IN DISPUTE SUCH AS THOSE BETWEEN ECUADOR AND PERU OR ECUADOR AND COLOMBIA, REPLIED RATHER SMUGLY THAT THE PARTIES HAD SIMPLY AGREED TO PRETEND THAT, FOR PURPOSES OF THE PACT, SUCH DISPUTES DID NOT EXIST. WHAT EFFECT THIS KIND OF NEGOTIATING MAY ULTIMATELY HAVE ON THE ABILITY OF THE VARIOUS PARTIES TO AGREE ON SUBSEQUENT INITIATIVES UNDER THE UMBRELLA OF THE PACT REMAINS TO BE SEEN.

10. FROM THE TIME THE FIRST DRAFT WAS CIRCULATED BY THE GOB IN THE SPRING OF 1977, THE PRINCIPAL APPARENT OBSTACLE TO MEANINGFUL AGREEMENT WAS VENEZUELA WHICH, ACCORDING TO FONMIN SOURCES, DID NOT EVEN OFFICIALLY ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF THE DRAFT FOR SOME MONTHS. THIS ATTITUDE PROMPTED SOME FAST DIPLOMATIC FOOTWORK BY FOREIGN MINISTER SILVEIRA, WHOSE EFFORTS WERE REWARDED BY AN INVITATION TO STOP IN CARACAS ON HIS RETURN TO BRAZIL FROM LAST YEAR'S UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY. THIS STOPOVER IN TURN RESULTED IN PRESIDENT CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ' UNPRECEDENTED VISIT TO BRAZIL LAST NOVEMBER. WITH VENEZUELA'S ACCESSION THUS ASSURED, THE PACT HAD RELATIVELY SMOOTH SAILING THROUGH

ITS SIGNING CEREMONY.

11. WITH REGARD TO THE AMAZON BASIN ITSELF, BRAZIL IS THE ONLY COUNTRY SO FAR TO HAVE ENGAGED IN AMAZON DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS, ALTHOUGH ITS EFFORTS IN DEVELOPING ITS OWN IMMENSE AMAZON AREA AND INTEGRATING IT WITH THE REST OF BRAZIL HAVE FLUCTUATED A GOOD DEAL OVER TIME. UNTIL WELL INTO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE INTERIOR

OF THE AMAZON WAS LARGELY IGNORED (THE EXCEPTION BEING THE QUICK RISE AND DECLINE OF MANAUS DURING THE LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY "RUBBER BOO."). THE GOVERNMENTS WHICH CAME TO POWER AFTER THE 1964 REVOLUTION INITIALLY GAVE CONSIDERABLE EMPHASIS TO DEVELOPMENT OF THE
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AMAZON AREA THROUGH CONCLUDING MASSIVE ROADBUILDING EFFORTS (THE BELEM-BRASILIA AND TRANSAMAZON HIGHWAYS) AND ENCOURAGING COLONIZATION THROUGH MIGRATION TO THE AREA. IN ADDITION, THE STATUS OF MANAUS AS A FREE TRADE ZONE WAS ACTIVELY ENCOURAGED.

12. A REASSESSMENT OF THE DEVELOPMENT POSSIBILITIES OF THE AMAZON OVER THE LAST FIVE TO TEN YEARS, HOWEVER, HAS RESULTED IN A LOWER PRIORITY FOR THE REGION. AGRICULTURAL COLONIZATION HAS ON THE WHOLE BEEN QUITE DISAPPOINTING; REALIZATION THAT THE SOIL IS FRAGILE AND NOT PARTICULARLY FERTILE, AND TRANSPORTATION PROBLEMS (DISTANCE FROM MAJOR MARKETS, DIFFICULTY IN KEEPING ROADS OPEN DURING THE RAINY SEASON, INCREASE IN LAND TRANSPORTATION COSTS AFTER THE OIL CRISIS) HAVE TENDED TO DISCOURAGE BOTH OFFICIAL AND SPONTANEOUS COLONIZATION EFFORTS. AN INDICATION OF THE DECLINE IN PRIORITY OF THE GOB'S AMAZON DEVELOPMENT PLANS WAS THE CANCELLATION IN 1977 OF THE GOB'S DOMESTIC SATELLITE COMMUNICATIONS PROJECT; THIS PROJECT HAD ALWAYS BEEN JUSTIFIED AS A MEANS OF AIDING THE INTEGRATION OF THE AMAZON WITH THE REST OF BRAZIL.

13. ON THE OTHER HAND, DESPITE SUCCESSIVE RESTRICTIONS ON ITS OPERATIONS, THE MANAUS FREE TRADE ZONE CONTINUES TO PROSPER, AND RADAR MAPPING OF THE AMAZON AREA OVER THE LAST TEN YEARS OR SO HAS REVEALED IMPORTANT DEPOSITS OF VARIOUS MINERALS, NOTABLY IRON ORE AND BAUXITE. INDICATIONS ARE THAT FUTURE GOB DEVELOPMENT POLICY TOWARD THE AMAZON WILL CONCENTRATE ON LARGE SCALE MINERAL AND OTHER NATURAL RESOURCE (SPECIFICALLY FOREST) DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS RATHER THAN AGRICULTURAL COLONIZATION. EXAMPLES OF THIS STRATEGY ARE THE TROMBETAS BAUXITE MINING PROJECT, THE CARAJAS IRON ORE PROJECT (POSTPONED, US STEEL WAS FORMER JOINT VENTURE PARTNER), AND THE JARI AGRO-INDUSTRIAL PROJECT OF US BILLIONAIRE DANIEL K. LUDWIG. THESE PROJECTS, HOWEVER, HAVE ALSO BEEN PARTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR BRAZILIAN CONCERN OVER THE ROLE OF FOREIGN CAPITAL IN AMAZONIAN DEVELOPMENT AND CONTRIBUTED TO THE GOB'S INITIATIVE WHICH RESULTED IN THE PACT.

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